TABERNACLE SERVICES.

STRAINING AT A GNAT AND SWALLOWING A CAMEL.

Dr. Talmage Says There Are a Thousand Scoundrels Outside the Church to One Inside of It—Why the Law Taxing Incomes Was Repealed.

BROOKLYN, Dec. 11.—To-night the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., preached at the Tabernacle, this city, on "Too Much Ado About Small Things." His text was: "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!" Matt. xxiii, 24. The eloquent preacher said:

A proverb is compact wisdom, knowledge in chunks, a library in a sentence, the electricity of many clouds discharged in one bolt, a river put through a mill race. When Christ quotes the proverb of the text he means to set forth the ludicrous behavior of those who make a great bluster about small sins and have no appreciation of great ones.

In my text a small insect and a large quadruped are brought into comparison—a gnat and a camel. You have in museum or on the desert seen the latter, a great awkward, sprawling creature, with back two stories high, and stomach having a collection of reservoirs for desert travel, an animal forbidden to the Jews as food, and in many literatures entitled "the ship of the desert." The gnat spoken of in the text is in the grub form. It is born in pool or pond, after a few weeks becomes a chrysalis, and then after a few days becomes the gnat as we recognize it. But the insect spoken of in the text is in its very smallest shape, and it yet inhabits the water—for my text is a misprint, and ought to read, "strain out a gnat."

My text shows you the prince of inconsistencies. A man after long observation has formed the suspicion that in a cup of water he is about to drink there is a grub or the grand parent of a gnat. He goes and gets a sieve or strainer. He takes the water and pours it through the sieve in the broad light. He says: "I would rather do anything almost than drink this water until this larva be extirpated." This water is brought under inquisition. The experiment is successful. The water rushes through the sieve and leaves against the side of the sieve the grub or gnat. Then the man carefully removes the insect and drinks the water in placidity. But going out one day, and hungry, he devours a "ship of the desert," the camel, which the Jews were forbidden to eat. The gastronomer has no compunctions of conscience. He suffers from no indigestion. He puts the lower jaw under the camel's fore foot, and his upper jaw over the hump of the camel's back, and gives one swallow and the dromedary disappears forever. He strained out a gnat; he swallowed a camel.

While Christ's audience were yet smiling at the appositeness and wit of his illustration—for smile they did in church unless they were too stupid to understand the hyperbole—Christ practically said to them: "That is you." Punctilious about small things; reckless about affairs of great magnitude. No subject ever withered under a surgeon's knife more bitterly than did the Pharisees under Christ's scalpel of truth. As an anatomist will take a human body to pieces and put them under a microscope for examination, so Christ finds his way to the heart of the dead Pharisee and cuts it out and puts it under the glass of inspection for all generations to examine. Those Pharisees thought that Christ would flatter them and compliment them, and how they must have writhed under the redhot words as he said: "Ye fools, ye whited sepulchres, ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel."

There are in our day a great many gnats strained out and a great many camels swallowed, and it is the object of this sermon to sketch a few persons who are extensively engaged in that business.

First, I remark that all those ministers of the Gospel are photographed in the text who are very scrupulous about the conventionalities of religion, but put no particular stress upon matters of vast importance. Church services ought to be grave and solemn. There is no room for frivolity in religious convocation. But there are illustrations and there are hyperboles like that of Christ in the text that will irradiate with smiles any intelligent auditory. There are men like those blind guides of the text who advocate only those things in religious service which draw the corners of the mouth down, and denounce all those things which have a tendency to draw the corners of the mouth up, and these men will go to installations and to presbyteries and to conferences and to associations, their pockets full of fine sieves to strain out the gnats, while in their own churches at home every Sunday there are fifty people sound asleep. They make their churches a great dormitory, and their somniferous sermons are a cradle, and the drawled out hymns a lullaby, while some wakeful soul in a pew with her fan keeps the flies off unconscious persons approximate. Now, I say it is worse to sleep in church than to smile in church, for the latter implies at least attention, while the former implies the indifference of the hearers and the stupidity of the speaker. In old age, or from physical infirmity, or from long watching with the sick, drowsiness will sometimes overpower one; but when a minister of the Gospel looks off upon an audience and finds healthy and intelligent people struggling with drowsiness, it is time for him to give out the doxology or pronounce the benediction. The great fault of church services today is not too much vivacity, but too much somnolence. The one is an irritating gnat that may be easily strained out; the other is a great, sprawling and sleepy eyed camel of the dry desert. In all our Sabbath schools, in all our Bible classes, in all our pulpits, we need to brighten up our religious message with such Christ like vivacity as we find in the text.

I take down from my library the biographies of ministers and writers of past ages, inspired and uninspired, who have done the most to bring souls to Jesus Christ, and I find that without a single exception they consecrated their wit and their humor to Christ. Elijah used it when he advised the Baalites, as they could not make their God respond; telling them to call louder, as their God might be sound asleep or gone a-hunting. Job used it when he said to his self conceited comforters, "Wisdom will die with you." Christ not only used it in the text, but when he ironically complimented the putrefied Pharisees, saying: "The whole need not a physician," and when by one word he described the cunning of Herod, saying, "Go ye, and tell that fox." Matthew Henry's commentaries from the first page to the last coruscated with humor as summer clouds with heat and lightning. John Bunyan's writings are as full of humor as they are of saving truth, and there is not an aged man here who has ever read "Pilgrim's Progress" who does not remember that while reading it he smiled as often as he wept. Chrysostom, George Herbert, Robert South, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jeremy Taylor, Rowland Hill, George G. Finney and all men of the past who greatly advanced the kingdom of God consecrated their wit and their humor to the cause of Christ. So it has been in all the ages, and I say to these young theological students, who cluster in these services Sabbath by Sabbath, sharpen your wits as keen as cimeters, and then take them into this holy war.

It is a very short bridge between a smile and a tear, a suspension bridge from eye to lip, and it is soon crossed over, and a smile is sometimes just as sacred as a tear. There is as much religion, and I think a little more, in a spring morning than in a starless midnight. Religious work without any humor or wit in it is a banquet with a side of beef, and that raw, and no condiments, and no dessert succeeding. People will not sit down at such a banquet. By all means remove all frivolity and all bathos and all lightness and all vulgarity—strain them out through the sieve of holy discrimination; but, on the other hand, beware of that monster which overshadows the Christian church today, conventionality, coming up from the Great Sahara desert of ecclesiasticism, having on its back a hump of sanctimonious gloom, and vehemently refuse to swallow that camel.

Oh, how particular a great many people are about the infinitesimals while they are quite reckless about the magnitudes. What did Christ say? Did he not excoriate the people in his time who were so careful to wash their hands before a meal but did not wash their hearts? It is a bad thing to have unclean hands; it is a worse thing to have an unclean heart. How many people there are in our time who are very anxious that after their death they shall be buried with their feet toward the east, and not at all anxious that during their whole life they should face in the right direction so that they shall come up in the resurrection of the just whichever way they are buried. How many there are chiefly anxious that a minister of the Gospel shall come in the line of apostolic succession, not caring so much whether he comes from Apostle Paul or Apostle Judas. They have a way of measuring a gnat until it is larger than a camel.

Again: My subject photographs all those who are abhorrent of small sins, while they are reckless in regard to magnificent thefts. You will find many a merchant who, while he is so careful that he would not take a yard of cloth or a spool of cotton from the counter without paying for it, and who, if a bank cashier should make a mistake and send in a roll of bills $5 too much, would dispatch a messenger in hot haste to return the surplus, yet who will go into a stock company in which after a while he gets control of the stock, and then waters the stock and makes $100,000 appear like $200,000. He only stole $100,000 by the operation. Many of the men of fortune made their wealth in that way. One of those men, engaged in such unrighteous acts, that evening, the evening of the very day when he watered the stock, will find a wharf rat stealing a newspaper from the basement doorway, and will go out and catch the urchin by the collar, and twist the collar so tightly the poor fellow cannot say that it was thirst for knowledge that led him to the dishonest act, but grip the collar tighter and tighter, saying: "I have been looking for you a long while; you stole my paper four or five times, haven't you?—you miserable wretch." And then the old stock gambler, with a voice they can hear three blocks, will cry out: "Police, police!" That same man, the evening of the day in which he watered the stock, will kneel with his family in prayers and thank God for the prosperity of the day, then kiss his children good night with an air which seems to say, "I hope you will all grow up to be as good as your father." Prisons for sins insectile in size, but palaces for crimes dromedarian. No mercy for sins animalcule in proportion, but great leniency for mastodon iniquity. A poor boy slyly takes from the basket of a market woman a choice pear—saving some one else from the cholera—and you smother him in the horrible atmosphere of Raymond Street jail or New York Tombs, while his cousin, who has been skillful enough to steal $50,000 from the city, you will make him a candidate for the New York legislature!

There is a great deal of uneasiness and nervousness now among some people in our time who have gotten unrighteous fortunes, a great deal of nervousness about dynamite. I tell them that God will put under their unrighteous fortunes something more explosive than dynamite, the earthquake of his omnipotent indignation. It is time that we learn in America that sin is not excusable in proportion as it declares large dividends and has outriders in equipage. [illegible] a man is riding to perdition, postilion [illegible] and lackey behind. To steal one co[illegible] a newspaper is a gnat; to steal many thousands of dollars is a camel. There is many a fruit dealer who would not consent to steal a basket of peaches from a neighbor's stall, but who would not scruple to depress the fruit market; and as long as I can remember we have read every summer the peach crop of Maryland is a failure, and by the time the crop comes in the misapprehension makes a difference of millions of dollars. A man who would not steal one peach basket steals 50,000 peach baskets. Go down in the summer time into the Mercantile library, in the reading room, and see the newspaper reports of the crops from all parts of the country, and their phraseology is very much the same, and the same men wrote them, methodically and infamously carrying out the huge lying about the grain crop from year to year and for a score of years. After a while there will be a "corner" in the wheat market, and men who had a contempt for a petty theft will burglarize the wheat bin of a nation and commit larceny upon the American corn crib. And some of the men will sit in churches and in reformatory institutions trying to strain out the small gnats of scoundrelism, while in their grain elevators and their storehouses they are fattening huge camels which they expect after a while to swallow. Society has to be entirely reconstructed on this subject. We are to find that a sin is inexcusable in proportion as it is great.

I know in our time the tendency is to charge religious frauds upon good men. They say: "Oh, what a class of frauds you have in the Church of God in this day;" and when an elder of a church or a deacon or a minister of the Gospel or a superintendent of a Sabbath school turns out a defaulter, what display heads there are in many of the newspapers. Great primer type. Five line pica. "Another Saint Absconded;" "Clerical Scoundrelism;" "Religion at a Discount;" "Shame on the Churches;" while there are a thousand scoundrels outside to where there is one inside the church, and the misbehavior of those who never see the inside of a church is so great it is enough to tempt a man to become a Christian to get out of their company. But in all circles, religious and irreligious, the tendency is to excuse sin in proportion as it is mammoth. Even John Milton in his "Paradise Lost," while he condemns Satan, gives such a grand description of him you have hard work to suppress your admiration. Oh, this straining out of small sins like gnats and this gulping down great iniquities like camels!

This subject does not give the picture of one or two persons, but is a gallery in which thousands of people may see their likeness. For instance, all those people who, while they would not rob their neighbor of a farthing, appropriate the money and the treasure of the public. A man has a house to sell, and he tells his customer it is worth $30,000. Next day the assessor comes around and the owner says it is worth $15,000. The government of the United States took off the tax from personal income, among other reasons because so few people would tell the truth, and many a man with an income of hundreds of dollars a day made statements which seemed to imply he was about to be handed over to the overseer of the poor. Careful to pay their passage from Liverpool to New York, yet smuggling in their Saratoga trunk ten silk dresses from Paris and a half dozen watches from Geneva, Switzerland, telling the custom house officers on the wharf, "There is nothing in that trunk but wearing apparel," and putting a five dollar gold piece in his hand to punctuate the statement.

Described in the text are all those who are particular never to break the law of grammar, and who want all their language an elegant specimen of syntax, straining out all the inaccuracies of speech with a fine sieve of literary criticism, while through their conversation go slander and innuendo and profanity and falsehood larger than a whole caravan of camels, when they might better fracture every law of the language and shock intellectual taste, and better let every verb seek in vain for its nominative, and every noun for its government, and every preposition lose its way in the sentence, and adjectives and participles and pronouns get into a grand riot worthy of the Fourth ward on election day, than to commit a moral inaccuracy. Better swallow a thousand gnats than one camel.

Such persons are also described in the text who are very much alarmed about the small faults of others, and have no alarm about their own great transgressions. There are in every community and every church watch dogs, who feel called upon to keep their eyes on others and growl. They are full of suspicions. They wonder if that man is not dishonest; if that man is not unclean; if there is not something wrong about the other man. They are always the first to hear of anything wrong. Vultures are always the first to smell carrion. They are self appointed detectives. I lay this down as a rule without any exception, that those people who have the most faults themselves are most merciless in their watching of others. From scalp of head to sole of foot they are full of jealousies and hypercriticisms. They spend their life in hunting for muskrats and mud turtles, instead of hunting for Rocky mountain eagles, always for something mean instead of something grand. They look at their neighbors' imperfections through a microscope and look at their own imperfections through a telescope upside down. Twenty faults of their own do not hurt them so much as one fault of somebody else. Their neighbors' imperfections are like gnats and they strain them out; their own imperfections are like camels and they swallow them.

But lest some might think they escape the scrutiny of the text, I have to tell you that we all come under the divine satire when we make the questions of time more prominent than the questions of eternity. Come now, let us all go into the confessional. Are not all tempted to make the question, Where shall I live now? greater than the question, Where shall I live forever? How shall I get more dollars here? greater than the question, How shall I lay up treasures in heaven? the question, How shall I pay my debts to man? greater than the question, How shall I meet my obligations to God? the question, How shall I gain the world? greater than the question, What if I lose my soul? the question, Why did God let sin come into the world? greater than the question, How shall I get it extirpated from my nature? the question, What shall I do with the twenty or forty or seventy years of my sublunar existence? greater than the question, What shall I do with the millions of cycles of my post terrestrial existence? Time, how small it is! Eternity, how vast it is! The former more insignificant in comparison with the latter than a gnat is insignificant when compared with a camel. We dodged the text. We said, "That doesn't mean me, and that doesn't mean me," and with a ruinous benevolence we are giving the whole sermon away.

But let us all surrender to the charge. What an ado about things here. What poor preparation for a great eternity. As though a minnow were larger than a behemoth, as though a swallow took wider circuit than an albatross, as though a nettle were taller than a Lebanon cedar, as though a gnat were greater than a camel, as though a minute were longer than a century, as though time were higher, deeper, broader than eternity. So the text which flashed with lightning of wit as Christ uttered it, is followed by the crashing thunders of awful catastrophe to those who make the questions of time greater than the questions of the future, the oncoming, overshadowing future. O, eternity! eternity! eternity!

An Illusion Fence.

W. E. Stout, Anderson county, Kan., sends us a description of a novel device to prevent and finally break any horse of the habit of jumping fences. He takes a piece of leather ten inches long and five inches wide—the leg of an old boot will do—cuts strips lengthwise, half an inch apart, and to within half an inch of the ends, and then removes each alternate strip of leather, leaving six strips, with five openings. Bind the leather spectacles over the horse's eyes with the strips across the head, placing two cornecobs, or any round substance of similar size, between the leather and the forehead, to keep it away from the eyes far enough to produce the illusion. Then let the horse loose in a clear field with plenty of room. The horse prepares to leap the illusion fence before him, and as he is ready to spring, the fence rises with the motion of his head, and he comes to the ground without making the leap. The horse will keep up the trial for an hour perhaps, and finally desist. After a second day with the leather spectacles, he could not coax the horse to leap a fence two feet high.—American Agriculturist.

Scene in Hungary.

A traveler writes that there is certainly little or nothing that can be qualified as attractive about Flume, in Hungary. From nearly all the upper windows in these little streets poles protruded, and on these were hung countless petticoats. These articles of female apparel were wonderfully and fearfully made. Some were brown some bright yellow, some red, others blue, and some seemed to have no color at all. While these emblems of female sovereignty proudly floated overhead, he failed to notice below any women whatever. There were a few men in the streets, but the women were conspicuously absent.—Chicago News.

Why the Rails Break.

It is said, on the authority of "an American railway engineer," that low temperatures do not decrease the strength of rails as is commonly supposed, although it is true that accidents are more likely to occur from broken rails in cold weather. This is because when the ground is frozen hard it loses its elasticity. Something must yield when the train runs over the road; it is the ground that yields in unfrozen weather; but during a freeze the ground will not yield, and the rail, as being the weakest part of the structure, has to suffer the consequences.—Boston Budget.

The London Zoological gardens have for the first time in their history a living gorilla.

WHAT SHALL WE WEAR?

NEWEST SHAPES IN LADIES' LINEN COLLARS AND CUFFS.

How New York Mothers Dress Their Children for Weddings and Parties—A Paris Made House Dress, Illustrated and Described.

The French morning costume illustrated in our cut is a graceful model which lady readers can have reproduced by their own modistes. This costume is made of open work pongee silk with red lines, red velvet and red satin. The shade of red is that known as mahogany, being of the same deep red hue as is the wood from which it takes its name.

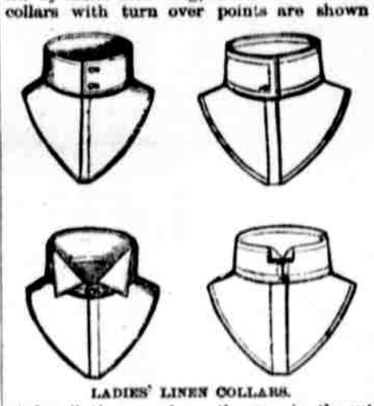
FRENCH MORNING COSTUME.

The satin skirt is bordered with a flounce of the pongee. The pongee overskirt is mounted on wide plaits, the lines on the cross. The tunic is pointed in front and draped with satin bows at the back. The low bodice with its puffed epaulettes of pongee is worn over a velvet guimpe with velvet sleeves and collars.

Linen Collars and Cuffs.

Linen collars and cuffs are now so generally worn with tailor gowns and other street dresses that manufacturers have put these necessary accessories on the market in a variety of styles that insure comfort alike to long and short necks. The shapes shown in the accompanying cut represent leading styles.

It is a matter of taste whether one wears a straight collar with ends lapping in front or collar with the points turned over. Each lady decides this question before her mirror, the most becoming shape being the one naturally selected. A popular collar is the straight one with lapped ends and of medium height. The straight, very high collar (two and one-half inches) is an exceedingly uncomfortable one to wear but is voted stylish by ladies with long, thin necks. In the collars with turn over points are shown



LADIES' LINEN COLLARS.

styles all the way from the one in the cut with the points slightly broken to the one with points turned over "dog ear" fashion and leaving quite a space in front. The last mentioned is a very comfortable collar for short, thick necks. Cuffs are made to match all the collars, though many wear the plain, straight cuff with a collar that has turn over points.

Children at Weddings and Parties.

Children at church weddings enter with their nearest relatives. Very small girls wear smocked gowns of white India silk, with high neck, full sleeves, and an accordion pleated skirt trimmed only with rows of feather stitching. Larger girls have heavier dresses of white repped silk, with a colored velvet yoke that is shaped like a zouave jacket in front, with velvet belts, sash, collar and cuffs. The skirt is full and round, and is gathered or pleated to the belt. Terracotta velvet, old rose, Gobelin blue and golden brown are worn with such dresses. Fine white camel's hair dresses, and those of white cloth with pinked edges, velvet guimpe and sleeves, are preferred by many fashionable mothers who are fond of saying their little girls have never worn silk, confining them to muslins in the summer and woolens in winter. On the other hand, the India silks are in such favor with many that they are used for the long robe in which the very young are christened. For Christmas and other parties cashmeres and serges are made up in bright poppy red, pink, copper color, and Gobelin blue shades, trimmed with braid or velvet of a contrasting color, or else with black.

Little prince suits of black velveteen, says Harper's Bazaar, from which the above was taken, are worn at family weddings and other dress occasions by boys of five years and upward after they have put on short trousers. The jacket buttons only once—just at the top—and slopes or curves away to show the closely buttoned vest, which may be of the same velveteen or of white pique. The deep round collar and wide cuffs are of white linen with an embroidered ruffle, and the large cravat bow is of white India silk or white surah. Silk braid half an inch wide is set along the fronts of the jacket in tab like pointed groups of three rows, or else it is arranged in half squares linked together. The short trousers fit smoothly. The long stockings are black, and the high shoes may be either buttoned or laced. Smaller boys wear velveteen suits, with kilt skirt and jacket more closely fitted than those of last year.

Fashion Items.

Fashionable slippers for morning wear are made of black silk, in Japanese shape, having broad soles and no heels.

Chain braid is a novelty in dress trimmings and is pretty and moderate in price. It is usually in two or three colors, and is sometimes interwoven with gold.

A novelty in neck dressing is a band of moire ribbon, white or colored, worn inside the dress collar, the picot or fancy edge showing above, a small bow being tied in front. A similar arrangement is seen upon the sleeves.

In place of the silver chatelaine girdles so popular during the summer, girdles of fur with gilt or silver attachments are seen.

Discovery at Lochleven.

A most interesting discovery has been made on the northwest shore of Lochleven. Mr. Robert Burns Begg, who is factor on Kinross estate, while investigating the history of Lochleven castle, etc., directed his inquiries specially toward the discovery of the remains of lake dwellings around the loch, and after considerable inquiry and research his efforts have been crowned with success. His attention was at first drawn to an accumulation of wood and stone lying at the bottom of the lake, on carefully examining which, some four feet under the water of the loch, it presented the remains of an ancient "crannog," and on further research being made the following articles were found—viz., bones and teeth of animals, along with portions of a clay hearth, with ashes adhering to it, and several pieces of sparred wood, with fragments of thick hand made crockery.

The only other "find" was a piece of wood, conjectured to be the handle of a wide heckle for dressing flax. These articles were forwarded by Mr. Begg to Dr. Joseph Anderson of the Antiquarian museum, Edinburgh, who states in his letter of acknowledgment: "You have undoubtedly discovered a 'crannog,' which may possibly yield a rich harvest of facts to subsequent investigation. The bones are those of the ox and swine; possibly, also, deer. The only artificial thing (except the clay vessel) is the wooden handle of a cup, scoop or ladle. The clay vessel must have been one of great size." So far as ascertained it seems to have consisted of an oblong platform parallel with the shore—about thirty yards from east to west and twenty yards from north to south. The superstructure, judging from the regular order in which the beams are still lying, have fallen to the bottom of the lake and the superincumbent layer of stones has prevented the timber from floating. This wood is reduced to a pulp, but traces of the bark are plainly discernible. Many have visited the locality.—Glasgow Mail.

Russia Wants India.

Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, a noted Russian scholar, has made the assertion that India must inevitably belong to Russia. The Russians are fast gaining a stronghold throughout India. There appears to be no danger of an immediate Anglo-Russian conflict, but if the present ameer should ask for British aid, his rival may ask Russia for help, and then there would be serious complications. Russia's tactics during the past ten years have all been made with a view toward getting control of India and Central Asia. Slowly she pushes on, first governing as a protectorate under native chiefs until gradually she gets control of the territory. In India disaffection is gradually spreading among the natives. The grievances of Maharajah Dulup Singh, the unsuccessful ameer, are attracting a great deal of attention, and it is asserted openly that if Russia will foot the bill 30,000 natives are willing to espouse his cause. Numerous Anglo-Indians would also be ready to fight against British government. The agitation in India is great, and there is likely to be, so the reports assert, more serious trouble than that of the terrible mutiny of 1857. The maharajah tried to secure England's aid, and when he did not succeed he turned to Russia. Every effort was made to try and prevent him from reaching Russia after he left England, but after many trials he reached Moscow, where he was received with marked consideration. He was a great favorite with the late M. Katkoff, who gave him material aid. There are no doubts that before many months have passed England and Russia will be quarreling about the Indian territory.—Demorest's Monthly.

Pasteur's Cure in Russia.

The director of the Odessa Bacteriological station has favored me with the following notes of the last twelve months' operations for the prevention of hydrophobia under the Pasteurian system. Five hundred and twenty-one patients, some of whom came from Turkey, were inoculated, and thirteen died.

The director divides the patients into three groups, the better to explain the proportion of fatal cases to the total number of patients dismissed as cured. In fifty-two cases the existence of rabies in the animals by which the patients were bitten was proved by trepanning. Of these patients one died. In twelve cases the rabid condition of the animals was proved by the deaths of persons bitten by the same animals, but who were not brought to the station. Of these one also died. There were 355 cases in which the patients all bitten by presumably rabid animals had manifested signs of hydrophobia. Of these seven died.

Sixteen persons were inoculated as a preventive measure, never having been bitten by animals, rabid or healthy, Dr. Gamaleя, the director of the Odessa station, and an enthusiastic disciple of M. Pasteur, has been inoculated three times, once in Paris and twice in Odessa, not for rabid bites, but, as he says, simply to give confidence to others.